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# Powerful Phrases for the Project Manager's Toolkit

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# ***Communication Always Needs Improvement***

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- **Ever participate in a workforce survey?**
- **Was communication on the survey?**
- **Did the survey results indicate communication as a top area for improvement?**
- **Ever participate in a survey where that wasn't the case?**

# Communication Has Many Forms and Levels

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**Paper**



**Verbal**



**Electronic**



**Unofficial**



**Group**



**Personal**

**Official**

# ***Communication is Vital to Project Success***

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- **Any good Project Manager (PM) appreciates the value of communication**
- **But, the tendency is to communicate at the macro**
  - Project status and victories
  - Issue resolution
  - Formal recognition
- **For maximum success, a PM should also focus on personal communication**
  - This can be very hard; especially for highly competent, self assured people – like successful PMs!

# ***Quality PM Personal Communication Enables:***

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- **Confident project team members**
- **Strong, cohesive project team**



- **Additional ideas and approaches**
- **Insight to what is going on in the depths of the project**

# ***Phrases for the PM Toolkit***

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## **7 Proven Personal Communication Phrases**

**OK, 8, cuz I figure you might consider the  
first a no-brainer.....**

# Powerful Phrase # 0

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## “Thank you”

- **Almost impossible to overuse**

- Large victories
- Small successes
- Hard won individual battles
- Everyday drudgery tasks



- **To be effective, the delivery must be sincere!**

# ***“Thank you”***

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- **Extremely powerful for an individual with personal, one-on-one delivery**
  - Accentuated when PM seeks out recipient
- **Highly effective corollary is publicly giving credit**
  - When PM specifically points out, and without prompting
- **Always remember:**
  - The people that work for you make you successful

**Gracias**

**Merçi**

**謝謝**

# Powerful Phrase # 1

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## “I don’t know”

- **Even the PM won’t, can’t, and shouldn’t know everything**
  - Admit it! Be recognized as normal....its okay
- **One of the most disastrous things you can do is to make up something**
  - Be honest; take an action and follow through with the response



# ***“I don’t know”***

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- **Use your “don’t know”s as opportunities to spotlight your folks who do**
  - A great leader will defer to their experts
- **Highly effective corollary is “I don’t know, but it seems to me....”**
  - Disarming and humble, it engages others without controversy
- **By admitting when you don’t know something, you have more credibility when you do weigh in**

## ***Powerful Phrase # 2***

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### **“You’re right”**

- **Have you noticed how difficult it is for people to say this?**
  - Especially highly competent and self assured people (like PMs....)
- **When delivered to those that are unable to say this themselves, it can really get their attention**



# ***“You’re right”***

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- **Particularly powerful when said to employees that have had an opposite opinion and you come to agree with their point**
- **Highly effective corollary is “You’re right, but have you considered....”**
  - **Complimentary intro to make a counterpoint**
- **Recognition of people’s strengths and abilities demonstrates openness to other ideas and willingness to give them credit**

## ***Powerful Phrase # 3***

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**“How are you doing?”**  
or What’s up?, How’s it going?, ...etc

- **A great opening that can’t be beat**
  - Interest and compassion for others
  - Stage setter to productive conversation
  - Gateway to what’s *really* going on
  
- **To be effective, you must be prepared to take some time and to listen!**



# ***“How are you doing?”***

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- **Particularly powerful when said to employees that have held an opposite opinion and you come to agree with their point**
- **Highly effective corollary is introducing tag-ups with “social” chit chat**
  - **To identify with others on a personal level, greatly improves interaction on difficult topics**
- **Taking the time for interest in others pays off in relationships, loyalty, and knowledge**

## ***Powerful Phrase # 4***

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### **“My personal apology”**



- **Personalizing can diffuse**
  - Convey undesirable news beyond your control
  - Talk to an unhappy customer about a situation
- **This must be applied judiciously and delivered with sincerity**
- **Highly effective corollary is personalizing a topic to equate to yourself**
  - Can disarm a volatile situation

## ***Powerful Phrase # 5***

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### **“What do you suggest?”**

- **Ideal for moving the discussion from venting to solving**
  - Let them have their whine, then make them part of the solution
  - The challenge is to then keep focus on the solving
- **Also great for getting additional potential solutions**
  - Tendency for the PM to take this on alone
  - Don't miss out on those great ideas from your team



# ***“What do you suggest?”***

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- **There are many highly effective variations:**
  - What would you do differently?
  - How would you word it?
  - What approach is better?
  - Etc.....
  
- **This phrase can successfully redirect people from ‘for the fun of it’ criticism to solution definition and agreement**

## ***Powerful Phrase # 6***

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### **“What do you need from me?”**

- **A great closing that can't be beat**
  - An effective and helpful way to wrap up a conversation
- **Helps you find out what they really are after**
  - People tend to not want to ask directly, but when given the entrée, will respond
- **Be sure to follow through on the needs**
  - Beware of taking on other people's actions!

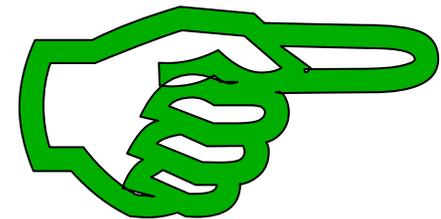


# ***Powerful Phrase # 7***

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## **“Make it so”**

- **Clearly authorize and empower people to implement**
  - Essential to strong project performance
- **There is both risk and reward**
  - May need to do damage control
  - Builds a competent and dedicated team
  - Grows the PMs of the future
- **Make sure the plans are sound, then set them to it!**



# ***Powerful Phrases for the PM Toolkit***

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- **Thank you**
- **I don't know**
- **You're right**
- **How are you doing?**
- **My personal apology**
- **What do you suggest?**
- **What do you need from me?**
- **Make it so**

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